

Errands (Part 3 of Coffee and Contemplation and Kisses) by obeydontstray

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Summary: (Revamped) Hopper has one last errand before he goes home for Christmas. (Fluffy little one shot on how I think season one should have ended).

Errands (Part 3 of Coffee and Contemplation and Kisses)

Hopper's fist lingered inches from her door, pausing for a breath before knocking.

The door opened slowly and he could smell the food inside before her face appeared in the doorway.

"Oh hey Hop."

Joyce looked about ten years younger than the last time he seen her. All the weight of Will's disappearance and the madness that ensued erased from her face. She looked genuinely happy.

"Hey." He offered, bracing his weight with his hand on the doorway, his hat gripped in his free hand. "I just wanted to check in, make sure everyone's okay."

"Oh yeah, just getting ready for dinner. Yeah you should come in and join us."

"Oh nah, that's okay. I've got some business to attend to. Thanks though." He stammered, knowing very well he was headed home to an empty house and a bottle of booze.

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The silence fell heavily between the two of them, both wanting to say more. She glanced back inside at her boys sitting around the table, talking amongst themselves and playing with Jonathan's new camera.

"Thank you, Hop." She added, still watching them. "Thank you for bringing my Will home." His lips drew into a tight line as he looked inward at the boys too.

"I'd better be headed home. Merry Christmas, Joyce."

He turned and headed down the steps when she called to him.

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Stopping on the bottom step, he turned to look at her. She paused in the doorway for a moment before stepping out, pulling the door closed behind her.

She stood on the top step, eye to eye with him, and leaned forward, pressing her lips to his. The kiss deepened between them and her hands found their way to his chest. They broke apart and she rested her forehead against his as they both caught their breath.

"Please come in. Don't spend Christmas by yourself."

He swallowed hard, crimping the brim of his hat. "You know Christmas isn't easy for me."

She took his face in her hands and kissed his cheek. "I know. Stay with us. Please."

"Good night Joyce." He turned to leave and as he climbed into the driver seat of his truck she called to him again.

"Merry Christmas, Jim." He raised his hand to her as he turned the key in the ignition.

She stood in the doorway, her arms crossed over her chest as he pulled away. He watched her in the rearview until he pulled onto the open road.